PROSPECT: OR, VIEW OF THE MORAL WORLD.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1805. *NO.* 8.

JOHN STEWART, celebrated for his pedestrian perambulations over both hemispheres, and still more for his philosophical enquiries respecting the intellectual powers and moral constitution of man, proposes to publish, in this City, a periodical paper, to be entitled *The New World; or, American Spectator.* The Prospectus for this work contains so many strong and original ideas, and such manly firmness of expression, that we presume it will be gratifying to our subscribers to see it published in the Prospect. It is as follows :

John Stewart, the Traveller, the Editor and Author, having passed the greater part of a life of near sixty years in travelling among the most interesting nations of the world, with the sole object *the study of man*, and not plants, animals, and fossils, the common pursuit of the great herd of travellers.

In such a school of manhood, having acquired a moral temperament, liberated from all national and local prejudices of education, custom, and habit, and all the doctrines of false science, and foolish superstition, presumes himself qualified to treat and conduct, to its important end, the great desideratum of all social energy, *the absolute Liberty of the Press*, offered as an unparalleled boon to mankind, by the sublime republic of America.

This inestimable boon of intellectual life, refused to all nations, throughout all ages, was reserved to stamp an indelible character of beneficence on the American revolution, as both a pledge and a mean of its successful and happy result, sweeping into oblivion the driveling æras of the foundation of cities, the birth of impostors, and the crowning of tyrants, and marking the true and only æra of human existence with the fiat of intellectual light, and creation of the moral world, a stupendous and beneficent event, that if the sublime experiment of the American constitution should ultimately fail, the absolute liberty of the press existing but a day, in concurrence with the power of genius to use it, would form the salvation and consolation of the human species.

It was the opinion of a French philosopher, Condorcet, that if the absolute and unlimited liberty of the press, was to be established in any country of the globe, it would form a source of light that would not fail to illume the whole world, and enable man to develope his high characteristic of perfectability, by bursting, like the chrysalis, the bag of instinct, to assume the wings of calculative reason.

Timid and weak minds, regarding order as the definition of virtue, dread the reform of public opinion, lest revolution and anarchy should ensue, such false alarms have ever been felt at the occurrence of reform in opinions and actions throughout the history of the civilized world.

When Luther opposed the diabolical superstition of Catholicism, the outcries of the church echoed the loss of social order; when John

Locke wrote his mediocrite treatise on the human understanding, the bishops apprehended the subversion of the whole moral system.

Let timid minds who shudder at the progress of light and reform, view the Chinese nation, holding two hundred millions of people in a rigid state of order, and in a dissolute state of atheism; let them view the whole civilized world in a chaos of moral principles, founded on metaphysical subtleties, where millions are ready to destroy each other for the meaning of unintelligible sounds, and preposterous creeds of superstition.

Let them, above all things, contemplate the idea and important definition of moral truth, viz. *The most just and most general relation of things*, which can be developed only in the progress of improving intellect, to discover the category of human existence, in thought and action, which, like the growth of the body, may be the cause of disease and disorder, or like the child, may fall often in learning to walk, but its advancement, however accompanied with error and injury, is indispensable to happiness, and the developement of human perfectability.

To develope and advance this new intellectual creation of moral truth, to investigate without any temporization with opinions, customs, or creeds, and with the most unbounded latitude of elementary inquiry, all subjects, religious, moral, political and philosophical, in order to discover the highest theories of human perfectability (the only distinguishing characteristic of man from the brute species) and to ascertain those practical modes of social institutions which may lead to their accomplishment, through the slow, sure, and safe progress of experimental reform, public instruction, and intellectual improvement.

The editor conjures the enlightened citizens of America to contemplate the present awful crisis of human existence. The nations of Europe, struggling in hostile contention, not for colonies or islands, but for dominion and extirpation. Mad ambition, like a thief in the night, is every where extinguishing the lamp of the press to facilitate the triumph of despotism, in its congenial elements of darkness and ignorance; while America alone presents the light of reason in the absolute liberty of the press, and calls upon every human being, who has a spark of manbood in his nature, to illumine from its trembling spark, the inextinguishable torch of truth, before the auspicious occasion is lost, and the whole civilized world be deluged in one general flood of despotism, darkness, and superstition.

The light of truth, like the fire of the Persians, will be inextinguishable and eternal, when the laws of intellectual power shall be discovered to tear the curtain from the puppet show of deception and credulity, the wires of demo-craft, king-craft, philosophy-craft, and priest-craft, being exposed to the view of the spectators, Punch, and his whole family of moral, political, metaphysical, and theological puppets, will lose their supposed life, and sink into their wooden essences, never more to be resuscitated, by the knaves or dupes of credulity.

The interiour, or behind the scenes of the theatre of reason and nature, will then be exposed, where no curtain can conceal deception, and where all mankind will see and understand their true interests, and true happiness, in both theory and practice, in the discovery of the moral, identified with physical science, in *the most just and general relation of things*.

In the present awful and momentous crisis of human existence, can the homilies of the nursery *tatlers, guardians, spectators, and periodical works*, of every description, made up of tales and anecdotes of domestic follies, sectarean controversy, and party politics, offer a criterion to human speculation and practical conduct? No, these diaries of fashionable follies, and chronicles of childish custom, must be superceded by some bold original work, to discover the great circle of moral truth, *The most just and most general relation of things;* which, like the mathematical circle, can have no measurement formed of its parts till its center and periphery is ascertained in the most recondite of its elements, and the greatest amplitude of its perfectable system; and while the American liberty of the press has drawn the gag from the mouth of man, all nature cries aloud, seize the auspicious moment! *speak, speak all you think!* give full utterance to the highest intellectual energy that may frustrate for ever the replacement of the *tremendous gag* by superstition and despotism.

Such is the momentous and inestimable object of this proposed work, calculated to form the most auspicious concurrence of events, that ever dignified the human history, viz. *The light of nature meeting the liberty of reason*, and the American who dares not read or support it with his patronage, can have no manhood in his nature, and is no more fit to be a member or citizen of the sublime republic of united nations, than a bladder of air is fit to be the member of a stone arch.

The proposed work will develope the neglected and important study of man and nature, in the discovery and establishment of the laws of intellectual power, illustrated in a general view of the moral and political state of all nations, visited by the author, in the most interesting and extensive travels ever performed.

The elements of true knowledge, language, education, and political economy, will be displayed, to form them into systems or science, to teach *sagacity and wisdom*, as substitutes to vain and pompous learning, which has made civilized man little more than a refined and lettered savage, as exemplified in the French revolution, where the legislative pedants of science proved their defect, of sagacity and wisdom in every principle of the moral science, by decreeing death to prisoners of war, and thus descended, by one short and sudden step, from the pinnacle of civilized refinement to a state of barbarism, far more tremendous than savage life, with the multiplied passions of civilization, void of the simplicity and moderate desires of the child of nature.

The defective intellect of the whole human species in civilized life, advancing in the technical powers of science, and not the essential powers of sagacity or wisdom, is exemplified with meridian evidence by the *bestial custom of duelling*. This custom descends far below the decree of the French legislature, on the scale of barbarism, for it subverts the whole fabric, end, and purpose of civilized society, by authorizing personal resentment to trample down the barriers of social, protective law, and thus exalts knavery and folly over wisdom and virtue.

Who but a scientific idiot can think that putting to death an accuser in a duel, acquits the accused? Should a ruffian shoot his accusers in a court of justice, and meet the applauses of the bench! who would not entertain the most contemptible opinion of the understanding of the judges?

Let every man of sense ask himself this simple question, in what does the excellence of the human character consist? Every one will answer, in *superiour sense*, not science. If I have proved duelling to be an evidence of ideotism and bigotry, in the drivelling credulity and worship of fashionable folly, this short observation will do more than all the moral essays and sermons, to hiss it in contemptuous abhorrence round the world, as a brand of idiotism imported from Europe, *the sink of civilized folly*.

As a more demontrative evidence of scientific imbecility, and defective intellect, let us contemplate the pleasures and pursuits of individual and social life; in the first, man seeks to extend the circle of his follies, his vices, and his prejudices; in the last, we see Frenchmen march in hosts against Russians, these against Austrians, and these against Prussians, and after the death of millions, and the desolation of their countries in battle, what have they gained? a tyrant Peter for a more barbarous tyrant Paul.

In domestic and personal conduct, the fool of fashion pursues the shadow of pleasure for its substance, where cheap convivial mirth and jovial hospitality, are superceded by irksome feasts of etiquette and expensive luxury, which keep the passions in the constant tempest of gaming, to preserve the mind from the yawning tedium of fashionable life, or the more excruciating cares of debt and factitious indigence.

Dress, the guardian of comfort and of health, is so perverted in its use by the tyrant fashion imposing upon human imbecility, that man, betrayed into disease and anguish, descends in slow torture to the grave, to have the privilege of deforming personal beauty with ungraceful and costly ornaments of dress, that the plain, decorous and elegant clothing of a Spanish peasant, would villify and disgrace, in the comparison of grace, taste, sense, and use.

Above all other evidence of the present state of human imbecility, is the universally defective state of reason; man has no discipline of his mental faculties, he reasons consequences like the maniac, with no respect to, or examination of, premises, and decides all his moral propositions with but little contemplation to multiply his perceptions, or a delicate tact of doubtful judgment, to discriminate and compare his ideas, in the comprehensive relations of a whole system, with its distinct parts.

If farther evidence of civilized and scientific idiotism is demanded, look to education, and behold mankind rearing their offspring in prisons, called schools, where mephitic air and confinement debilitates the nervous system, and the construction of unintelligible sounds, stuffed into memory, is substituted to *sagacity*, or the skilful use of the understanding, preparing the whole race of civilized man to be the patients of an hospital, in both mind and body, rather than useful and happy citizens of social and perfectable life.

Does instinct ever make such preposterous errors in the goose or the hen, in teaching the goslings to perch on trees, or the chickens to take the water, or confine them to the detriment of their growth and strength, and shall intellect, which seems the buffoon of the animal world, be deified, while sagacious and unerring instinct is despised? No! the Egyptian mythology was superiour to the Grecian, deifying sane instinct in preference to insane intellect.

The present state of superstition in civilized life, consummates the evidence of defective intellect, in which scientific idiots greet each other, *with a collusive wink of the eye and a whisper.* These sectarian follies are not made for us, but for the vulgar, who must be blind-folded with superstitious folly, in order to make them citizens, that is, the fleecy flock of patient sheep, for duellists, demagogues and pedants to subsist upon, through the artifices and cunning of a technical intellect, ready every moment to sink into a deplorable state of civilized barbarism, whenever the sceptre of a conqueror, or the force of revolution, shall break the slender and artificial clue of civil order.

Ask these self-dubbed enlightened men of letters, and not ideas, what are their principles of moral truth? and they will appear as ignorant as the uninformed mass they delude, trample upon, and despise.

This truth has been deplorably exemplified in the annals of all human history, marking the revolutions and re-revolutions of Doctrines, Opinions, and Creeds, from Deism to Dogism, from Monarchy to Democracy, from civilization to savage life; nothing has been permanent, nothing elementary, nothing systematic. The mind of man has been stuffed by education like a sack with vain and useless knowledge, instead of being treated as an instrument of sagacity, to be used with skill, in discovering the ends and means of human happiness in the study of man and nature, to check the incessant action of change and contingency, by establishing the elements of the moral science in the most just and most general relations of things.

The supreme object of the American Spectator will be, *to discover the moral science*, to teach sagacity as a substitute to letter'd knowledge to form the *essential* rather than *technical* powers of the intellect, to enable man through the discipline of his understanding to choose proper ends and accommodative means of human happiness, the true definition of wisdom, developing the moral science as the most just and most general relations of things, which, if once discovered, can never degenerate or be lost in change or contingency.

I conjure every enlightened and liberal American to regard the colossal scale of physical and moral nature, emulating each other in his happy country. Gigantic mountains, rivers, winds, and lakes, making pigmies of the Alps, and puddles of the waters upon the eastern continent; and above all, let him view with pride and extacy, the sublime and unparallelled confederacy of Democratic Republics, which carries the moral scale of collosality in a comparative view of all ancient and modern nations, as far beyond the reach of comparison as a mountain to a mole hill.

With this stupendous spectacle of moral and physical nature, in your view, will ye suffer, Americans! the mind to remain on the pigmy scale of European parish schools, teaching words for ideas, Academies teaching dead languages, instead of living sagacity, and Colleges teaching fallacious logic, and the reveries of metaphysics for the discipline of the understanding. No, the great tutor experience will force you to study sagacity and wisdom in the medium of travel, conversation, natural education, and the lecture of such bold philosophy as can alone elevate the mind of man to meet the colossal scale of nature's fabric in this her favoured and chosen country, to make experiments of human perfectability, not in revolutionary policy, not in vain and

verbal codes of reformed morality! but in fraternal institutions of small societies, where coadjutation superceding competition and reducing to a simple scale of common interest, the easy calculation of wise self-love can alone (like the ancient problem of ballancing the egg) give the simple solution of the moral science in theory and practice.

AMERICAN CITIZENS,

I conjure you in the name of that universal nature of which all mankind are the constituent, co-equal, co-essential, and co-interested modes or parts, to regard with peculiar attention the unparallelled state of your national condition.

Associated and voluntary members and citizens of a community founded on axioms of political union, so simple, so sublime, and so perfect, that they were regarded chimerical by the scientific ideots of Europe, who viewed things in the false medium of European circumstances. Beware of this example, and do not attempt to quadrate your theories and practice with the inappropriate precedents of their unhappy though expedient policy, suited to their unhappy condition.

Nature seems to have placed the American population in a condition suitable to try every experiment of human perfectability. For this sublime purpose she has given to man such an abundance of territory that may secure for many ages that equality of property and ease of subsistence, which form an immoveable basis of social union, to resist all the shocks of avarice, opinion, ambition, and foreign hostility.

We have seen in this country cities desolated by pestilence, and the whole of their inhabitants driven from their possessions and subsistence to the asylum of their fellow-citizens in the country, without evincing the least shock to social order.

We have seen the whole of this country, subsisting under a suspension of all general government during the interregnum of the federal constitution.

We have seen the whole population of Georgia, subverting the organism of government, annulling the laws, and resuming all power into their own hands, and all this without the least danger to social order, because a people of Proprietors have an invincible pledge of common interest and common happiness in the union of individual and social good.

Had either of these events taken place in Europe, a revolution of power must have ensued, where millions of non-proprietors if not deterred by military power, would have broken loose, and scrambled for the scanty territory of a few fugitive monopolizers.

In the unhappy countries of Europe, the Press is not allowed to whisper any kind of moral, political, or religious truth, lest the blindfolded multitude, like the Miller's horse, should stop in his course, if the bandage of his eyes should admit the least glimpse of light.

Enlightened Americans, how long will you suffer yourselves to be the dupes of analogy, with the unhappy but expedient policy of Europe, which differs as much with American policy, as the elements of land and water, to the fishes and the beasts.

Europe, holding monopolized property, must give monopolized power to proprietors. America, holding diffused and equal property,

must attach to it diffused and equal power in the people. Europe combines the policy of church and state to keep the people in ignorance and obedience. America has separated the state from the rotten pillars of the church, to guard the people from ignorance and slavish obedience; but feeling the influence of European analogy, it is still continued, as the basis of morality, and substituted *to the true and only criterion. Public utility identified with private good.*

How often has my indignation and pity been excited in hearing Americans adopt the common plea cant of European politicians; what is to become of our courts of justice, if religion is not made the criterion of morality? I'll tell you, deluded analogizers, let the penalty of Outlawry be substituted to fire and brimstone, and we shall witness no more the partial or perjured testimony of friendship and gratitude, easily reconciled to theological vengeance, but not so terrible a penal statute.

I appeal to every man of common sense whether crimes would be so common if the punishment of the law was to be made more severe and more inevitable. I will instance that of murder, which, expiated by an easy death, and accompanied on the scaffold with psalms of joy, and forgiveness of a priest, if this punishment was commuted to a solitary dungeon for life, I demand, in the name of common sense, whether the terror of retribution would not be more dreadful than the threats of theology, removed by the purchased absolution of a priest.

I shall conclude this Prospectus with an impressive appeal to the good sense of the American people, in the following important question. Would it not be equally absurd to object to the improvement of corporeal growth, as to that of intellectual growth, from an apprehension of its evil consequences? In a country whose popular government depends for its success, on a spirit of moderation, which nothing but wisdom and sagacity diffused over the whole mass of population can dictate, teach, and procure, and whose local circumstances of equal property, remote locality, and diffused instruction of sagacity, render it inaccessible to all shocks of ambition, power, and opinion, and qualify it to be the first and last asylum of the philosophy of reason, truth, and nature?

The proposed important essays, conducted on a colossal scale of interest, intellect, and freedom, to suit the momentous crisis of the moral world, and the singular and auspicious predicament of America, will be published during the six winter months, in weekly numbers, on half a sheet of paper, subscription three dollars per annum, to be paid in advance, as the press will not be set to work till its expenses are fully and previously received.

The author of this work continues to read lectures on the laws of intellectual power, knowledge, language, education, and political economy, in the several towns of the northern states during summer, and in those of the southern states during winter, the substance of which will be inserted in the American Spectator.

Subscriptions will be received by Mr. Judah, in Maiden Lane, where the essays will be delivered, when called for, in the first week of November next, and by other booksellers in the various towns, as will be advertised in due time.

In the sixth number of this paper, the two last paragraphs were taken verbatim from the English Biographical Dictionary. The names in both paragraphs should have been transposed; this was neglected in correcting the proof sheet. In the paragraph which relates to Addison, there is the following sentence; "*He now engaged in a laudable and excellent work, a defence of the Christian religion.*" Some few of our subscribers have called in question the propriety of inserting a sentiment like this in the Prospect; but every body knows that Addison was himself a Christian, and from this sentence it appears, that his Biographer was also a Christian. The Editor inserted the paragraph as it was in the English Biographical Dictionary; it was of no consequence to know whether Addison and his Biographer were stupid enough to believe in Moses, Jesus, and the superstitious tales of antiquity; nor was it of any consequence to make critical remarks upon the creeds of either of them. This is a circumstance that speaks for itself, and it was merely because Addison had acquired some literary fame, that we presumed some of our readers would be gratified with this Biographical Anecdote. If his Biographer had made him any thing else but a Christian, or if he had spoken in favour of any other religious system, the case would have been precisely the same, and the paragraph should have been inserted entire.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

SYLVIUS ÆNEAS or PIUS II. born in the year 1405, at Corsigny in Sienna, where his father lived in exile.—Pope Pius was famous for his wise and witty sayings, some of which are as follow: That as a covetous man is never satisfied with money, so a learned man should not be with knowledge. That common men should esteem learning as silver, noblemen prize it as gold, and princes as jewels. A citizen should look upon his family as subject to the city, the city to his country, the country to the world, and the world to God. That the chief place with kings was slippery. That as all rivers run into the sea, so do all vices into the court. That the tongue of a sycophant was a king's greatest plague. That a prince who would trust nobody, was good for nothing; and he who believed every body, no better. That those who went to law were the birds, the court the field, the judge the net, and the lawyers the fowlers. That men ought to be presented to dignities, not dignities to men. That a covetous man never pleases any body, but by his death. That it was a slavish vice to tell lies. That lust sullies and stains every age of man, but quite extinguishes old age.

DISCOURSES upon Moral and Philosophical subjects, will be delivered by the Editor, every Sunday evening, in Mustan's Long Room, No. 11, George-Street, at half past six o'clock.

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